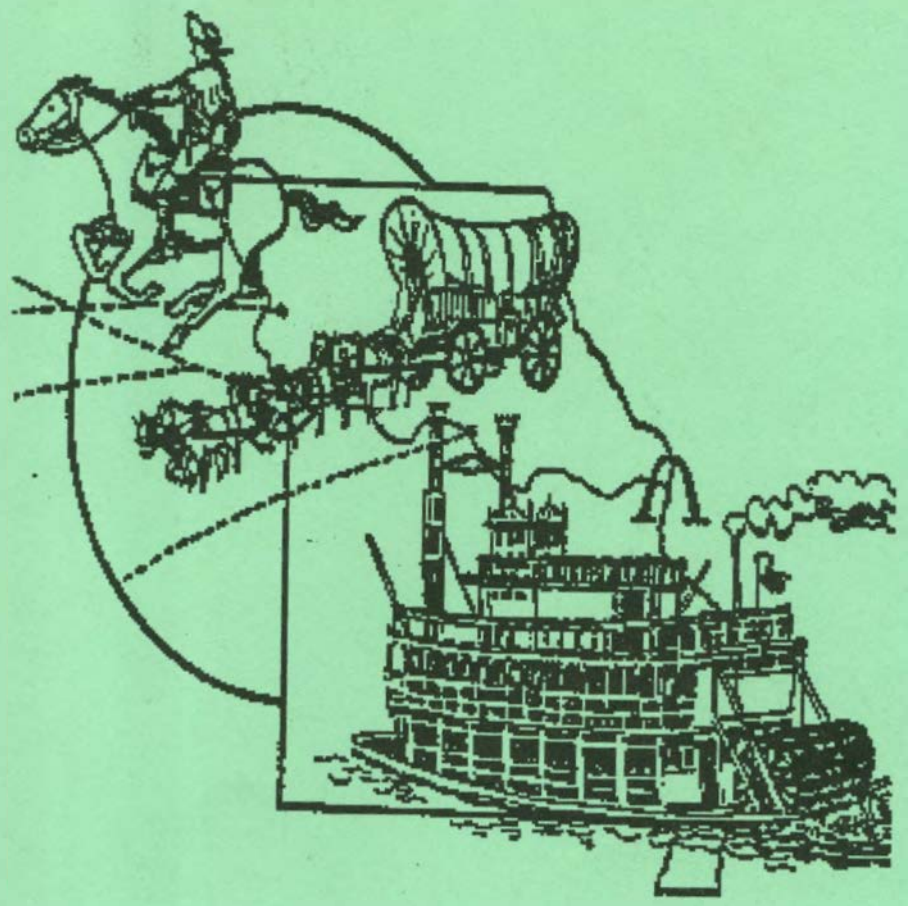

# Toward The Setting Sun

*2nd Series*, Vol. 10, No.2 Spring 2012

# *TOWARD THE SETTING SUN*

***The Historical Journal of the Missouri Conference***

***The United Methodist Church***

***Second Series***

Volume 10 No. 2 Spring 2012

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## FROM THE EDITOR

This year, 2012, marks the thirtieth year since a meeting of a commission set up by the two Missouri Conferences to mark Methodism's bicentennial in 1984, held an historic meeting at Central Methodist University. Out of that meeting came a proposal for an historical journal that would publish articles of significance to Missouri United Methodism. I was appointed the founding editor of that journal and the first issue appeared in the fall of 1982. I continued as editor until the early 1990s, when my work at the Publishing House in Nashville made it impossible to continue producing one more publication. A series of editors took over, but each died or had to resign for other reasons before another issue was forthcoming. When my wife and I retired and returned to Missouri in 2000, I volunteered to take up the journal again. When I did, another member of the commission asked jokingly, "you are aware that all the editors who replaced you died in office"?

Some twelve years later, I'm still alive and we're still producing copies of *Toward the Setting Sun.* There is a delightful variety of articles in this issue. Our lead article, by Raimonda Martin-Davis, is a significant piece of historical research, one that will be of great interest to all who are interested in African-American membership in the church. She has compiled a list of all the African-American preachers who were admitted on trial (that's what the AOT in her charts stands for) between 1866 and 1886. An earlier article by Raimonda documented those pastors admitted before 1866. We are all indebted to her for his outstanding study.

The second article, on a Southern Methodist "foreign mission" to California, falls into the "I didn't know that. Did you know that?" I ran across this information while researching a book on Andrew Monroe, and immediately said, "I didn't know that." There is no original research behind this article. Rather, it is a summary of material garnered from other histories – but I was fascinated by finding something I didn't know about and thought you might be as well.

The other two articles are more general in nature. Bishop Millhouse's article on the history of the EUB church and the background for the merger with Methodism is

taken from a conference journal in 1965 – three years before the merger was approved. It has some material about Missouri, but for the most part it is simply good, solid, information about more of our heritage that we don't always remember. Finally, Richard Seaton's article on Robert Strawbridge also falls into the "general" category. Strawbridge was an early pioneer for Methodism in the new world. He died probably never having heard of Missouri. But his story is a part of our history and heritage that is often forgotten. We commend it to your reading.

If you have a topic that you think should be included in the journal, please let me know. I'll do whatever I can to help you "make it so". If you have an "itch" to write, but not a topic, please let me know about that, as well. I have a "wish list," and something on that list might be exactly what you're looking for. My email is jogooch@aol.com. You can also reach me at 816-347-9505, or by "snail mail" at 510 NW Murray Rd., Apt. 310, Lee's Summit, MO, 64081.

I prefer receiving manuscripts electronically – that really simplifies my life. If possible, use Times New Roman as your font, and 12 as the type size. I prefer line space of 1.5, rather than single- or double-spaced. I'll also take manuscripts in hard copy, if that is what you need to do.

Thank you for your continued support of *Toward the Setting Sun*, and for sharing this thirty-year journey with me.

John O. Gooch

# AFRICAN-AMERICAN METHODIST MINISTERS IN MISSOURI 1866-1886

*RAIMONDA MARTIN-DAVIS*

During slavery, there were many black lay preachers in the divided Methodist Episcopal Church; but due to Methodist polity, these 'colored lay preachers' were not a part of the appointment process. But nevertheless, they preached the gospel, led classes and served societies throughout rural Missouri. A review of the conference journals of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, reveals several communities throughout the state: St. Louis, Sedalia, Lexington, New Madrid, Springfield, Potosi, and Fayette reported 'colored' members as a significant part of their statistics. In the churches with 'colored' membership, the colored members more than likely worshiped in a separate section of the church or at a separate hour as laws of the community would permit. Some communities permitted the 'colored' worshipers to have their own small worship house. In St. Louis, Missouri, the 'colored' worshipers at Fourth Street Methodist Church had a separate meeting place and had obtained a small parcel of property prior to the Civil War. With the end of the Civil War came freedom for the blacks of Missouri. On January 11, 1865, the ordinance to abolish slavery in Missouri was passed by the Missouri State Constitutional Convention. When the Missouri-Arkansas Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church convened March 1-7, 1866 at St. Joseph, Missouri, William W. Andrews and Tarleton Harding were the first black clergy appointed by Bishop Levi Scott. Rev. Andrews also was appointed as Presiding Elder of the Arkansas District (all colored). In 1867, Edward Waters S. (EWS) Peck was transferred from the all 'Colored' Washington Conference into the Missouri-Arkansas Conference and appointed to the little church later to be known as Wesley Chapel in St. Louis, MO. John M. Hawkins, Edgar Pitts, Spencer Taylor and Christopher Tays were also admitted
on trial the same year and received appointments in the Missouri-Arkansas Conference.

The Methodist Episcopal Church in Missouri established the Saint Louis Conference in 1869. As the black communities began to grow, there was a need for more black preachers. At the 1870 Saint Louis Annual Conference, the 'Missouri District' was formed and likewise at the 1871 Missouri Annual Conference, the 'Missouri North

District' was formed. These two new Districts were unique in that only black preachers and black members were included in the Districts. Between 1870 and 1886, the black membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church increased from 3,125 to 5,651. By 1886, black Methodists within Missouri owned 84 church buildings, 33 parsonages and had a membership of 6,355 including probationary members.

The labors of these black pioneer preachers were long and hard. Conditions were not the best as Missouri was recovering and rebuilding from the Civil War. These preachers, some born as freemen, some newly freedmen, and some coming back from the Civil War, all preached the gospel with a great deal of zeal and power. Some were educated and had the goals of sharing this knowledge with the others of color. Many, many souls were converted to Methodism. In their small communities they began with the organization of a Sunday School class that developed into a mission, then into a church. With a collective effort of their membership, property was purchased and churches were built. As the segregated Black districts desired a better position within the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, they presented a resolution at the 1884 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The black leaders of the MO District and the MO-North District requested to be set apart into a separate Conference.

The name chosen for this new Conference was Central Missouri Conference. The work and progress of these black pioneer preachers well deserve to be remembered as an important contribution to our Missouri Methodist history. Between 1866 and 1886, 118 black preachers received appointments in Missouri.

*The following three tables list all of the black lay preachers admitted on trial (AOT) into the Methodist Episcopal Church in the state of Missouri between the years of 1866 and 1886.*

TABLE I
MO-AR CONFERENCE

| *AOT* | *Name* | *1st Appointment* |
|---|---|---|
| 1866 | Andrews, William Wallace Pe: | Arkansas District (All Colored) |
| 1866 | Harding, Tarlton | Little Rock Circuit |
| 1867 | Hawkins, John M | Glasgow Circuit |
| 1867 | Peck, Edward W S | St Louis: Wesley Chapel |
| 1867 | Pitts, Edgar | Springfield: Pitts Chapel |
| 1867 | Taylor, Spencer | Sedalia: Taylor Chapel |
| 1867 | Tays, Christopher | Cadet |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1868 | Ashby, William | Chariton Mission |
| 1868 | Brown, Wm Henry Harrison | Saline |
| 1868 | Thatcher, George | Cadet |
| 1868 | Lee, John A | Sedalia: Taylor Chapel |
| 1869 | Crawford, Henry | Louisiana: Wesley Chapel |
| 1869 | Hughes, Jordan W | Louisiana: Wesley Chapel |
| 1869 | Tate, John | Mexico |

1. Missouri-Arkansas Annual Conference Journals Methodist Episcopal Church, 1866-1869

TABLE II
MO CONFERENCE - NORTH MO DIST

| *AOT* | *Name* | *1st Appointment* |
|---|---|---|
| 1869 | Jackson, E | |
| 1870 | Ayres, Daniel | Supply-Mexico |
| 1870 | Wright, Prince | Chariton |
| 1870 | Cooper, Daniel | Supply Pastor: Glasgow |
| 1870 | La Near, Samuel | Supply - Wentzville |
| 1870 | Overton, A Lewis | Supply - Troy |
| 1871 | Jones, Henry | Pendleton |
| 1871 | Penn, James | Bowling Green |
| 1872 | Austin, Alexander | Fayette / Columbia |
| 1872 | Brown, Charles L | Montgomery City |
| 1872 | Burton, Austin | Fayette Circuit |
| 1872 | Cato, Isaac | Bloomfield |
| 1873 | Douglas, L | Supply - Troy |
| 1873 | Jackson, O | |
| 1874 | Brummitt, Dennis | Pendleton |
| 1874 | Jackson, Leroy J | Supply - Grassy Creek |
| 1874 | Jeffers, John | Fulton |
| 1874 | Kelley, Samuel E | Columbia |
| 1874 | Taswell, James F | Fayette |
| 1875 | Collins, James | Columbia |
| 1875 | Evans, J | Supply - Brunswick |
| 1875 | Jackson, James W | Snowhill / O'Fallon |
| 1876 | Abbott, George B | Montgomery City |
| 1876 | Clark, John J | Richland |
| 1876 | Edwards, William | Chariton |
| 1876 | Wright, Jeremiah | Fulton |
| 1879 | Cravens, Johnson Samuel | Troy |
| 1879 | Reeves, George W | North Fayette |
| 1881 | Davis Richard | Warrenton |
| 1881 | Gillum, Richard Edward | Bowling Green |
| 1881 | Taylor, Lewis N | Supply Montgomery City |
| 1882 | Nelson, R P | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1884 | Clark, John C | Sebrey |
| 1884 | Reeves, Timothy | Montgomery |
| 1884 | Sales, Fielding | Elsberry |
| 1884 | South, Henry | Louisiana Circuit |
| 1884 | Wilson, Benjamin F | North Fayette |
| 1885 | Colby, William G | Fayette |
| 1885 | Curry, George E | Glasgow |
| 1886 | Johnson, James W | Tsfr To Central Mo Conf |
| 1886 | Lockwood, Thornton Henry | Tsfr To Central Mo Conf |
| 1886 | Lynch, William O | Tsfr To Central Mo Conf |

2. Missouri Annual Conference Journals Methodist Episcopal Church, 1869-1886

TABLE III.
ST LOUIS CONFERENCE: MISSOURI DISTRICT

| *AOT* | *Name* | *1st Appointment* |
|---|---|---|
| 1870 | Abernathy, Allen | Buffalo |
| 1870 | Dunn, John W | Warrensburg |
| 1870 | Payne, John Woodson | Henry County Mission |
| 1870 | Small, Frederick H | Sedalia: Taylor Chapel |
| 1870 | Wilson, William E | Little Rock Dist: Jacksonport |
| 1870 | Ayres, Daniel | Irondale |
| 1871 | Campbell, William | Butler |
| 1871 | Coleman, Anthony | Little Rock Dist: Huntersville / Richwoods |
| 1871 | Crutchfield, Madison | Waverly |
| 1871 | Dickson, Edward | St Louis Circuit |
| 1871 | Rector, Robert | Longwood |
| 1871 | Reed, Martin | Rolla |
| 1871 | Steele, Benjamin | California |
| 1871 | Thompson, Henry W | Kingsville |
| 1871 | Vinson, Clark | Versailles |
| 1871 | Washington, James H | Jonesborough |
| 1872 | Crockett, Charles, H | Holden |
| 1872 | Wallace, Oliver | Rolla |
| 1873 | Briscoe, George W | Clinton |
| 1873 | Rush, Richard | Georgetown |
| 1873 | Smith, Robert Henry | Lexington / Greenton Valley |
| 1873 | Wright, Jeremiah | Jefferson City |
| 1874 | Chesteene, Virgil | Sedalia Circuit |
| 1874 | Dyer, John J | Lexington |
| 1874 | Evans, James Dudley | Clinton |
| 1874 | Haygood, Lewis M | Greenton |
| 1874 | Smith, Reuben H | Mt Vernon |
| 1874 | Wheeler, William H | Holden |
| 1874 | Williams, William H | Warsaw |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1875 | Brown, John Wilson | Malta Bend |
| 1877 | Lawton, Charles J | Supply - Arrow Rock |
| 1878 | Mccutchen, William B | Neosho |
| 1878 | Ramsey, Andrew | Wellington |
| 1878 | Taylor, Lewis N | Independence, Ks |
| 1880 | Atkinson, Patrick | Neosho / Joplin |
| 1881 | Keeton, Calvin M | Supply - Desoto |
| 1881 | Lawton, William R | Kansas City: Asbury |
| 1881 | Mccormack, Scott | Desoto |
| 1881 | Reynolds, Lewis | Georgetown / Dresden |
| 1881 | Talbert, Benjamin F | Springfield Circuit |
| 1882 | Burton, Joshua S | Georgetown / Mt Vernon |
| 1882 | Crosby Richard | Supply - Rock Creek / Finish Creek |
| 1882 | Evans, Samuel L | Desoto |
| 1882 | Hill, John W | California |
| 1882 | Jackson, John Will | Ironton / Potosi |
| 1883 | Summers, James W | Desoto |
| 1883 | Timothy, Benjamin W | St Louis: Wesley Chapel |
| 1884 | Baker, Henson | Higginsville / Odessa |
| 1885 | Anthony, Edward | Ironton / Potosi |
| 1885 | Mcallister, Henry W | Bridgeton / Rock Springs |
| 1885 | Peyton, Dennis | Wellington |
| 1885 | Williams, Thomas H | Neosho / Newtonia |
| 1886 | Irvin, David L | |
| 1886 | Johnson, James W | |
| 1886 | Mccain, Beriah | |
| 1886 | Smith, William H | |
| 1886 | Thomas, James W | |

3. St. Louis Annual Conference Journals Methodist Episcopal Church, 1870-1886

# Some Notes On Missouri Missions To California

*John O. Gooch*

In the year 1848, gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in California. When word reached the East, the stampede was on. Drawn by the lure of riches, men dropped whatever they were doing and tried to get to California. This was significant for Missouri, because Missouri was the state from which the vast majority of the gold-seekers who went overland started. And more Missourians went to California than those from any other southern state.

The Southern church wanted a mission to the gold seekers. "Many of them had been taught the truths of Christianity in their childhood, and it would not do to let them drift forever from their moorings."[1] A meeting of the bishops of the Church in May, 1849, determined to establish a mission in California. Note that this was an action of the bishops, not of the General Conference. In fact, there was considerable opposition to the action throughout the south. Many thought that to enter a territory technically north of the Mason and Dixon Line would stir up resentment and strife with the northern church. This was especially true since there was general agreement that California was unsuited for slavery in any case. Leave well enough alone, was the feeling in the south church. Don't get us embroiled in some slavery issue over starting a mission project. For those today who consider California a major player in politics and economics in the United States, it will come as a surprise that, in 1849, California was to be considered a "foreign" mission! Bishop Paine was named as the supervisor of the mission. He appointed Jesse Boring of the Georgia Conference as the superintendent for the mission. Rev. D.W. Pollock of the St. Louis Conference and Rev. A.M. Wynn of the Georgia Conference were appointed to accompany him. They were to leave early in 1850 on the first steamer for the Isthmus of Panama.

Missourians were deeply interested in the mission – it was aimed at people they knew. Simmons said, "Missouri has ever played an important part in California Methodism. There are, and ever have been, more Missourians in the Church on this

[1] J.C. Simmons, The History of Southern Methodism on the Pacific Coast. Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1886, p. 14.

coast than any others." [2] Andrew Monroe, the patriarch of Missouri Methodism, urged Missouri preachers to go to California and become part of the mission. The spread of the church and its increase was always foremost in his mind and heart.

The missionaries were in New Orleans in January of 1850. However, due to the press of those wanting to get to California, steamer space was full to over-crowding and they could not sail until March 1. They reached the isthmus, went overland to the Pacific side, and caught another ship for San Francisco.

The missionaries landed in San Francisco April 15, 1850, and immediately set to work. They agreed that Dr. Boring would stay in San Francisco, Pollock would go to Sacramento, and Wynn to Stockton. Somehow, this arrangement got changed, for it was Pollock who organized the church in Stockton. He built a small wooden chapel on Seventh Street, between J and K Streets. It was named Asbury Chapel and was 34 by 60 feet, with the parsonage in the rear of the building. Most of the money that was raised to pay for it came from those not connected with any church, so Pollock had an effective outreach. Simmons says that "D.W. Pollock was said to be a very brilliant preacher. He was frail of body...well calculated mentally and spiritually to get the attention of the population. His health began rapidly to decline, and before many months, while the fields were waving white to the harvest, with heavy heart he turned his face homeward, a confirmed consumptive. He lived only a few short months after his return to Alabama." [3] Calling him a consumptive meant that he contracted either tuberculosis, or some other respiratory disease. He was neither the first nor the last Methodist preacher to literally give his life for the sake of the gospel. In addition, it was A. M. Wynn who founded the first society in San Francisco. It had 11 members.

The original barrier the missionaries faced was a lack of pastors. They had Methodist literature, they had Bibles (furnished by the American Bible Society), they had converts. The response to their preaching to these lonely men was beyond their early expectations. They formed classes and circuits and enrolled members. Eventually more pastors came and California was well supplied with preachers.

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[2] Ibid., p. 15.
[3] Ibid., pp, 21-22.

The General Conference of 1850 authorized the formation of a Conference, and in April 1852 the Pacific Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was organized in San Francisco. It was the first Methodist Conference west of the Rocky Mountains. In 1853, when Bishop Soule presided over the Conference 537 members were reported, and $1200 in missionary money was collected. Looking ahead, the conference of 1883 reported seventy traveling preachers, forty-seven local preachers, 4,480 White members, eight Colored members and seven Indian members. They also reported Pacific College, located at Santa Rosa.

Bishop Lovick Pierce, in a letter of September 7, 1860 said "I hope the day will come when we shall be numerously represented in every State and Territory of the American continent, in every nation and province, every continent and island of this round earth."[4] Pierce went on to say,

1. The Methodist Episcopal Church South is a necessity and a blessing in California.
2. The Pacific ought to be vigorously maintained by means and men.
3. If our church authorities would send strong, wise, experienced ministers here, the Methodist Episcopal Church in five years would outnumber all other denominations combined. The Church, North, would rival us in the cities and in the mines; in the rural districts we should soon count five to their one, and in a short time, as far as Methodism is concerned, would be well-nigh the sole occupants of the land. I put these opinions on record here. Time will test their soundness.[5]

Charles Elliott, a strong Northerner, was sure that Pierce's emphasis on preaching the gospel was a cover for the expansion of slavery. In the larger scheme of things, both north and south agreed that slavery would never flourish in California, so one suspects that Pierce's statement is closer to the truth than Elliott's.

The "West" had moved from the area between the Allegheny Mountains and the Mississippi River to the wide reaches of the Pacific Ocean. Later, a missionary

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[4] Charles Elliott, Southwestern Methodism: A History of the M.E. Church in the South-West from 1844 to 1864. Cincinnatti: Poe and Hitchcock, 1868, p. 222.
[5] Ibid., p. 223.

conference was organized around Los Angeles (one district of this conference included Arizona). This came about as the result of a preaching mission by Bishop E.M. Marvin, a Missouri native. He was a member of the St. Louis Conference of the M.E. Church, South, and the first Missourian to be elected Bishop of the church. One more connection between Missouri and the Pacific Coast. In addition, the Columbia Conference, including Oregon, and Idaho and Washington Territories was organized. This conference had a college at Corvallis.[6]

While Missouri was not the only conference involved in the mission to California, our state did supply one of the first missionaries and one of the great bishops of the church who helped organize the Los Angeles Conference. In addition, perhaps thousands of the members of the M.E. Church, South, were men who had gone to California seeking for gold.

[6] Holland N. McTyeire, A History of Methodism. Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, 1916. p. 622.

# The Historical background of Evangelical United Brethren-Methodist Union

*Bishop Paul W. Milhouse*

The Evangelical United Brethren Church was officially established at Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in 1946 through the union of The Evangelical Church and the United Brethren Church. Both of these churches had their beginnings in the religious revival which swept through the American colonies in the second half of the eighteenth century.

The United Brethren Church was officially organized in 1800 by a group of ministers associated with Phillip William Otterbein, pastor of the Reformed Church in Baltimore, Maryland. Phillip William Otterbein, the second son of the Right Reverend and Mrs. John Daniel Otterbein, was born in Dillenberg, Germany, June 3, 1726. His father died when he was sixteen years of age, and his mother with her six boys and one girl, moved to Herbern so her children could be educated at the famous reformed school in that city. All six of the Otterbein boys became ministers. Phillip William Otterbein completed his studies, taught for a while, and was ordained in the reformed tradition June 13, 1749, in the church at Dillenberg, where his father had formerly served as pastor.

Phillip William Otterbein responded to a missionary call from America in 1752. After passing examinations at The Hague in Holland along with five other ministers of the Reformed Church, they were solemnly consecrated to mission work and set sail for New York, landing there on July 28, 1752.

At this time, it is estimated that there were 90,000 Germans in Pennsylvania, a third of which were traditionally attached to the Reformed Church. They were without knowledge of the English language, and to a large extent they were without pastors and schools. Most of these Germans had been of the peasant class at home. Many of them had sold years of service to pay for their passage money to the new country. While most of them had come to America to escape religious and political persecution, they brought little in the way of religious discipline to guard and nourish their spiritual life. Their

minds were hardened by the treatment they had met and their energies were taxed in their struggle to build homes and earn a living in the new world.

In August, 1752, Otterbein became pastor of the Reformed Church in Lancaster, Penn-sylvania, a town established twenty-four years earlier by Germans from around the general area of Dillenberg. The congregation had been without a regular pastor for about one-half the time since it had been organized. During his second year as the pastor of a log church, which had been erected in 1736, Otterbein led the congregation in erecting a new and attractive stone church.

It was in this church at Lancaster that Otterbein passed through a spiritual crisis that brought new vitality and urgency into his ministry. A member of the congregation came to him after the sermon one Sunday morning and asked for counsel. Otterbein replied, "My friend, advice with me is scarce today," and he went into his study, locked the door, fell on his knees and prayed for some time until the peace and joy of a conscious salvation was his.

From then on Otterbein preached that a conscious experience of salvation was the privilege of all Christians. The doctrine of assurance became prominent in his sermons. He forsook the strict theology of Calvinism and became Arminian in his thinking. He discarded his carefully prepared sermon manuscripts to speak directly and personally to his congregation. He dedicated himself to the task of spiritual renewal for the church, to bring new depth to the religious faith of his people.

Otterbein always served as a pastor, but did some preaching beyond his own parish to German-speaking people living in the Susquehannah and Shenandoah river valleys. Many of these meetings were held in open fields or in groves of trees, and salvation as a living, vital experience through faith in Jesus Christ was the usual theme.

Among the preachers who were sometimes heard at these gatherings was a Mennonite by the name of Martin Boehm. He had been chosen by lot in 1756 to be a minister according to the Mennonite custom of that day. Boehm took his appointment but he soon became greatly distressed. He wrote: "To be a preacher and yet have nothing to preach, nor to say, but to stammer out a few words and then be obliged to take my seat is shame and remorse. I had faith in prayer, and while engaged in praying

earnestly for aid to preach the thought rose in my mind, as though one spoke to me, saying, 'you pray for grace to teach others the way of salvation and you have not prayed for your own salvation.' This thought or word did not leave me....I felt and saw myself as a poor sinner. I was lost. My agony became great. I was plowing in the field and knelt down at the end of the furrow to pray. The word 'lost' went every round with me. Midway in the field I could go no further with something behind the plow crying, 'Lord, save me. I am lost.' And again the thought or voice said, "I come to seek and to save that which is lost.' In a moment, a stream of joy was poured over me. I praised the Lord and left the field and told my companion what joy I felt."

Martin Boehm's life and preaching was transformed through this experience and he began preaching in the German settlements in Pennsylvania and Maryland. He was made a bishop of his church in 1759.

Isaac Long, who had been converted under Boehm's preaching, invited Boehm to preach at his farm six miles northeast of Lancaster, Pennsylvania on Pentecost, 1776. Phillip William Otterbein, then pastor in Lancaster, attended this Sunday afternoon meeting. Because of rain, the crowd moved into the spacious barn where the hay was stored in winter. Otterbein made his way to the platform after the benediction and, throwing his arms around this plainly dressed Mennonite preacher said, "Wir sind bruder." (we are brethren). The meeting of these two men that day eventually led to the establishment of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ in 1800, organized primarily for a spiritual ministry to the German-speaking people of the New World.

## The Evangelical Church

The Evangelical Church grew out of the ministry of Jacob Albright, who was born at Fox Mountain, three miles northwest of Potstown, Pennsylvania on May 1, 1759 and was confirmed in the Lutheran Church in 1776, at the age of eighteen. His parents had come to Philadelphia from the Palatinate in September, 1732.

Jacob Albright served in the Revolutionary War, married Katherine Cope in 1785, and settled on a farm in Lancaster Pennsylvania. The young couple united with the Bergstrasse Lutheran Church, near Hinkletown, located about three miles from their farm. The Albright couple lost several of their children during an epidemic of

dysentery. The father interpreted this misfortune as an act of punishment from God. He became very bewildered, especially from the fact that he, himself, had been miraculously saved from death on several occasions.

During these days of mental strain and extreme sorrow, he found help in his religious instruction as a youth, but he was not satisfied. During this period of spiritual struggle, he came under the influence of Otterbein and other ministers of similar evangelical emphasis. He wrote, "The feeling of my unworthiness increased from day to day until in my thirty-second year in the month of July it reached a degree bordering even on despair. I felt myself so little and unworthy and my sins so great that I could not conceive how a just God, who judges according to deserts, could possibly do otherwise than hurl me into the abyss of damnation."

Jacob Albright went to the home of Adam Riegel, a lay preacher of the United Brethren Church who lived a half mile west of his home, for daily instruction and prayer, until he found spiritual victory. Albright wrote this in his diary one day: "This persevering and fervent prayer brought me nearer and nearer to my enlightment. I realized power to consecrate myself to good things and to submit my will entirely to the will of God. I heard the voice of consolation in my soul. Then I learned to understand and was convinced that since God does not desire the destruction of a sinner, but that he should turn from his way and live, he would look upon my sincere penance and contrition of my heart with gracious eyes, and that the merit of my Lord and his bitter suffering and death would complete the work. Now I constantly make progress.... Through this continuous struggle I was finally able to separate myself entirely from the way of flesh and only attend to that which is love.... God's spirit here witness with my spirit that I was a child of God."

Albright was attracted to Otterbein, Boehm, Neidig, Riegel, and others of the United Brethren group because of their warm evangelistic fervor, but since they were not organized and had no discipline or regulations for their members, he joined the Methodist class which met in the home of Isaac Davis, another neighbor of his. His motivation for joining the Methodist Church was that he might attain a high degree of personal Christian living. He wrote, "In the class and prayer meetings of the Methodist Church my joy in God increased daily and I received power to pray impressively in

public to the edification of myself and others. Thus I realized more and more strength, and occasionally at the request of my fellow Christians, I delivered an exhortation which did not remain fruitless. Naturally I had not talents to speak in public and I frankly confess that I was less qualified in this respect than any other who might have undertaken it, but when I felt myself carried away by the Spirit of God, when prayer brought my soul nearer to my Redeemer, when I was animated with a hatred against sin, when the righteousness of a scrutinizing judge appeared before me and I at the same time realized his overwhelming love towards his fallen creatures, I was seized upon by an influence which loosened my tongue and God's grace wrought through me the conversion of fallen and unconverted professors of religion and the edification of true believers."

Albright felt himself called to preach to the German-speaking people and was made a lay preacher in the Methodist Church. Small classes of Christians were formed here and there as a result of his preaching. Three of these classes, with a total membership of twenty, formed an organization in 1800 around the leadership of Albright, patterned after the Methodist Church. The records say: "They were known as Albright people and pledged themselves to pray with and for each other that they might be saved from sin and flee from the wrath to come. They decided to spend Sunday in social prayer and set apart every Wednesday for prayer meetings. They sought to avoid everything evil and sinful and do all manner of good as God gave them strength and ability." They later took the name 'The Newly Formed Methodist Conference.' Several years afterwards, when it became apparent that it was to be a separate group from the Methodist Church, the name was changed to 'Evangelical Association.'

## Evangelical United Brethren-Methodist Association

During these days of the formation of The Evangelical United Brethren and Methodist churches, we find the early leaders working closely together as personal friends with a common interest and passion for their fellow countrymen. Otterbein went to Baltimore in 1774 to become pastor of the Evangelical Reformed Church at the insistence of Francis Asbury, who had recently come to America. This was the beginning of a very close personal friendship between Asbury and Otterbein. Otterbein laid his hands upon Asbury in ordination. The two men worked out a discipline for

church members, which later became the basis for The Discipline of the United Brethren Church, the Evangelical Church, and the Methodist Church. Lovely Lane Chapel, usually considered to be the mother church of Methodism in America was organized in Otter-bein's church in Baltimore.

When Otterbein died in 1813, Francis Asbury was out of the city. The local Methodist pastor preached the English sermon at the funeral. When Asbury returned to Baltimore the following spring to preside at the Methodist Conference, by special action of the ministers one session of the conference was held in the United Brethren Church where Otterbein had served forty years as pastor, and a special memorial service was conducted for Otterbein, with Bishop Asbury preaching the sermon.

Asbury and Albright were personal friends. The union of the Evangelical Church and The Methodist Church was discussed by Asbury of the Methodists and Deisbach of the Evangelical Church on a ride together down the Susquehannah River.

Martin Boehm and Asbury were personal friends. Martin Boehm, who was elected bishop of the United Brethren Church along with Otterbein at the 1800 organizational conference, had a son who became an ordained minister in the Methodist Church and a traveling companion of Asbury. The Boehm family belonged to the Methodist Church in order to give their children an opportunity to worship in English. Bishop Boehm finally became a member of the Methodist Church while still continuing as bishop in the United Brethren Church, in order that he might share in the Holy Communion services of the Methodist Church in his neighborhood. The Boehm family gave land to the Methodist Church so that a chapel could be built on the farm. When Martin Boehm died, Asbury preached the funeral sermon.

These personal relationships of our early leaders led to definite correspondence, talks, and conversations about union. It seems clear that two rather incidental things prevented us from becoming one church in the beginning. One was the difference in language. The Evangelical and the United Brethren preachers felt a specific responsibility to preach the gospel to the German- speaking people of the new world. Asbury's ministers preached to English-speaking people. Asbury believed that German

would soon pass away as a language in America, so he was not interested at that time in establishing German-speaking congregations.

The second was the early death of our leaders. Jacob Albright died in 1807, Boehm in 1812, Otterbein in 1813, Asbury in 1816. The leaders that followed were caught up in westward migration and the need to follow the people in their westward movement. Evangelical and United Brethren preachers followed the frontiers to minister to the German-speaking people. The Methodist preachers established English-speaking churches.

Since 1802, when the first official negotiations for union of the Evangelical United Brethren and Methodist churches began, there has been a renewal of union talks in nearly every generation. Through official actions, our recent General Conferences have instructed our commissions to prepare a Plan and Basis of Union which we can review together in Chicago in 1966.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is moving us together and pray that we will soon be one church.

NOTE: United Brethren families began moving into southwestern Missouri in the middle of the past century, and some classes were formed in Jasper County. In 1851, one of the Ohio Confer-ences presented Bishop Glassbrenner with $126 for work in Missouri. The next year, another Ohio Conference elected a presiding elder to serve in Missouri, and added to the gift of the first conference $30 and a pledge of daily prayer on his behalf. That same year he came to Missouri in a buggy. He reported that there were opportunities for United Brethren in Missouri, but not without establishing churches. He returned to gather money, bought some materials and shipped them to Missouri. He took passage part way by steamer, then bought a horse and rode the remainder of the way. With his own hands he helped build the first United Brethren house of worship in Missouri. The Missouri Conference was organized in 1854, with three ordained and two unordained missionaries assigned to five mission fields.

The former United Brethren churches in Missouri present a picture of uncertainty and indecision. Conference boundary lines were shifted often. At various times, Iowa Conference and Kansas Conference had responsibility for supervision. In 1897, Missouri Conference churches reported 1,450 members in one Missouri Conference. Most of these original churches in Missouri were no more than preaching places where small groups of people met in school-houses or homes to hear a United Brethren circuit rider when he came through the community. Most of them never became organized congregations as we know them today.

Today, there are thirty-three Evangelical United Brethren churches in Missouri, scattered from Springfield in the south to Brookfield, Kirksville and Trenton in the north. There are six in the St. Joseph area and three in Kansas City.

## ROBERT STRAWBRIDGE

*RICHARD A. SEATON*

Two hundred and fifty years ago a Methodist lay preacher migrated to the American colonies. His name was Robert Strawbridge. It was Strawbridge that preached the first Methodist sermon, formed the first Methodist society, and built the first Methodist church in this "New World." He came without a bishop appointing him and received no salary.

We really have very little information about Robert Strawbridge. We don't know the year of his birth but we do know that he was born in Leitrim County, Ireland. He was converted by the preaching of John Wesley and soon became one of Wesley's local preachers.

The Irish did not easily accept the forcefulness of Methodism. Folks there were very loyal to the Roman Catholic Church. Strawbridge suffered persecution there along with other Methodists. In 1761, financial problems made him decide to migrate to America. When he arrived he settled near Sam's Creek in Frederick County, Maryland. His new home was on the western frontier of the colony and just 6 years prior to his arrival an Indian Massacre had occurred there. That area had just finally been won from the Native Americans.

The wilderness didn't bother him and he quickly invited his scarce neighbors to his home and began preaching services. It was not long before he had organized a Methodist Society of about fifteen persons.

That small group decided to build a small log church about a mile away from his cabin. He called it the "Log Meeting House." It was crudely built using logs to form a square twenty-two feet on each side. There were no windows, but simply some holes sawed in the logs to let in air and light. A doorway (no door) was also cut in the logs which allowed entrance and exit.

There was no floor, just the dirt of the ground with no chairs so people would stand or sit on the ground for services. That crude building was the first Methodist church building in what would become the United States.

This little group was not enough for Strawbridge. Soon, he expanded his preaching throughout Maryland and eventually into Delaware, Pennsylvania and Virginia. He not only preached in these areas but also organized Methodist societies and built small churches.

Since he was gone from his home so much he was not able to cultivate his land and he and his wife, Elizabeth, survived on meager rations. He said he trusted his Saviour for the material things of life, and God did provide. His neighbors in the society agreed to cultivate his land free of charge and provide for the wants of his family so that Strawbridge could keep on preaching.

It was sixteen years after he arrived when a benevolent Captain Charles Ridgely offered his a home on the Ridgely estate. Captain Ridgely was a wealthy man from the Baltimore area. Captain Ridgely was not a Methodist but he greatly admired Strawbridge and his work. It was because of this help that Strawbridge could devote full time to his passion, preaching and ministry.

Robert Strawbridge had already been preaching for about 10 years before John Wesley sent the first official lay preachers to America. Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor were warmly received by Strawbridge. He greeted them on their arrival in the "New World" when they disembarked in Philadelphia. In 1773, he deeded as many as six churches to these preachers and other trustees to hold for John Wesley and "such persons as should be appointed at the yearly conference of the people called Methodist in England."

That year of 1773 was also the year of the first Methodist Conference in America. It would be over 10 years until the official "1784 Christmas Conference" when the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized. The lay preachers held a conference every year until that time.

Until the 1784 Christmas Conference there was no official Methodist Church and there were no ordained Methodist Preachers, only lay pastors. Since there were no ordained pastors there was no one to administer the sacraments of the Lord's Supper

and Baptism. John Wesley was very clear on this rule, only ordained ministers could administer the sacraments.

Strawbridge disagreed with Wesley on this point and on his own decided that any pious minister should be able to give the sacraments. Even though he was not ordained, he began to baptize and perform the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. That first conference in 1773 discussed the problem of the sacraments and the conference agreed with Wesley's view that no Methodist preacher at that time would be allowed to administer the ordinances. They made an exception for Strawbridge and allowed him to continue the sacraments. This action shows the esteem and influence that Strawbridge held among his brothers.

It is said that one will be known by the fruits of his labors. The first society at Sam's Creek added five preachers to the Methodist movement. At that first conference in 1773 it was noted that there were 1160 Methodists in America. The fact that nearly half of them were in Maryland attests to the work of Robert Strawbridge. When Francis Asbury made his first visit to Maryland in 1772 he was impressed by the work that had been accomplished there and Asbury noted in his journal:

> "The Lord hath done great things for these people—Men who neither feared God, nor regarded man—swearers, liars, cock fighters, card-players, horse-racers, drunkards, &c., are now so changed as to become new men; and they are filled with the praises of God."

Robert Strawbridge felt that whatever part of the world he was in, it was his parish, and it was his duty to proclaim the gospel by word and deed. All this he did without being sent by a Bishop and without a promise of a salary. Strawbridge continued his work until 1781, when while traveling he was taken ill and died. He never saw the actual formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He is buried in Baltimore in Mt. Olivet Cemetery next to Bishop Francis Asbury.